



**REGION 1 HEADQUARTERS**  
490 N. MERIDIAN ROAD  
KALISPELL, MT 59901

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3/5/2020

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is conducting scoping to solicit public input on a proposal to restore Westslope Cutthroat Trout (WCT) in Martin Creek. Restoring, maintaining and protecting native species and their habitats is one of FWP's strategies to meet the agencies goal to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife populations, their habitats, and the public's opportunity to enjoy them.

WCT are recognized as a Species of Concern across its native range in Montana. In the Stillwater drainage WCT have significantly declined in abundance and distribution primarily due to interactions with nonnative fishes. The introduction of nonnative rainbow and Yellowstone cutthroat trout are of particular concern because of the hybridization threat they pose to native westslope cutthroat trout populations. Competition with nonnative brook trout has also led to declines in many WCT populations in the Stillwater drainage. Currently, WCT are confined to small stretches of headwater streams, usually above barriers, and lakes where they are stocked. Natural and manmade barriers, such as impassable road crossings, have protected the remaining populations from hybridization and competition.

Martin Creek contains a large waterfall that blocks upstream fish passage. Above the falls there is approximately 5 miles of stream containing a hybridized population of cutthroat trout due to stocking in the 1930's. FWP is considering a project to remove these fish using a plant derived fish toxicant called rotenone. This piscicide is routinely used in fisheries management. In 2005 rotenone was used to successfully remove illegally introduced northern pike from the Martin lakes. CFT Legumine, a formulation of rotenone, would likely be used for this project. The products label can be found at <https://www.zoecon.com/all-products/fish-management/cft-legumine-fish-toxicant> . Potassium permanganate would be applied to the stream at the top of the falls to neutralize the rotenone and prevent fish mortality downstream. Following the treatment WCT native to the Stillwater drainage would be stocked into upper Martin Creek to create a secure population.

FWP conducted preliminary habitat and biological surveys to assess the feasibility of this project and collect baseline monitoring data. Based on experience from previous projects the likelihood of successfully restoring WCT to this stream is high. The next step in evaluating this project is the development of an environmental assessment. To assure that this document is complete we are seeking issues associated with this project that you would like to see evaluated in an environmental assessment. Please submit issues or concerns you would like to see evaluated in an environmental assessment to:



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Comments will be accepted until April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Breidinger  
Flathead West Fisheries Management Biologist

C: Flathead National Forest, Tally Lake Ranger District  
Adjacent Landowners